UNITED NATIONS **DP**

Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund

Distr.
GENERAL

DP/FPA/1997/2
4 November 1996

ORIGINAL: English

First regular session 1997
13 -17 January 1997, New York
Item 2 of the provisional agenda
UNFPA

UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND

REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF, AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR, THE UNFPA COUNTRY PROGRAMME FOR BANGLADESH

Report of the Executive Director

I. BACKGROUND

1. UNFPA requests that the programme of assistance for Bangladesh, a category A country, be extended by one year through the end of 1997. The programme, which had been extended for one year through 1996, was approved by the Governing Council in 1991 for the five-year period 1991-1995, in the amount of $35 million, of which $28 million was to be committed from UNFPA's regular resources and $7 million from multi-bilateral or regular resources to the extent UNFPA's funding situation would permit. It is estimated that expenditures for the period 1991-1996 will amount to $31.8 million -- $30.7 million from regular resources and $1.1 from multi-bilateral resources. Thus, as provided for under the funding authority approved for the programme, UNFPA regular resources, amounting to $2.7 million, have been used to cover some of the programme activities that had been included under the multi-bilateral component of the programme. Taking this into account, UNFPA requests that the funding authority for the programme be increased by $3 million, raising the total funding authority for 1991-1997 to $38 million, of which $36.9 million would be programmed from regular resources and $1.1 million from multi-bilateral resources. This constitutes an effective increase of the amount of regular resources by $8.9 million.

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2. Civil unrest, including country-wide strikes and work-stoppages, contributed to delays in the implementation of programme activities, as well as to the postponement of the UNFPA programme review and strategy development (PRSD) mission and the subsequent formulation of the next programme of assistance. Since the programme was structured using the former work plan categories, the present request follows that format as well. The primary aim of the additional extension is to conclude and consolidate ongoing programme activities and to prepare for the next country programme starting in 1998 in accordance with the new Government's priorities and strategies.

3. The current (fourth) programme of assistance forms an integral part of the Government's population programme. The broad objectives of the programme of assistance will remain valid during the extension. However, special attention will be given to the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and to the reorientation of activities towards an integrated reproductive health approach, including family planning and sexual health. The aim of the programme is to assist the Government in: (a) building national capacity for policy analysis and for population programme planning, implementation, evaluation and coordination; (b) enhancing the outreach capability of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare; (c) promoting the integration of women's concerns into mainstream development activities; and (d) institutionalizing formal and non-formal population information, education and communication (IEC).

4. UNFPA's assistance complements the assistance provided by the other major donors active in the country, especially that of the World Bank-led consortium of donors in support of the Fourth Health and Population Project. In this context, UNFPA's assistance has concentrated on establishing maternal and child health and family planning (MCH/FP) services in the Maternal and Child Welfare Centres in the Rajshahi Division, as well as on providing technical and management training for MCH/FP professionals throughout the country at all levels. UNFPA has also assisted the country in strengthening family-planning management information and supervision systems. UNFPA has played a key role in the procurement and supply of contraceptives and provided technical assistance on issues concerning contraceptive logistics and availability.

5. The UNFPA programme has also had an important advisory and advocacy role in the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, helping to sensitize the public at large on reproductive health and gender issues, to integrate population concerns into primary and secondary school education and to motivate rural cooperatives to address reproductive health and gender issues. In addition, UNFPA has helped the Government to collect population and health data disaggregated by sex. Important progress has been made in strengthening national capacity in population and

development activities, and most of the activities of the programme are nationally executed. The UNFPA Country Support Teams (CSTs) in the region have helped in providing a vast array of technical assistance for Bangladesh in the population field.

6. The mid-term review of the programme carried out in July 1994 concluded that the focus on strengthening MCH/FP services has been appropriate and recommended strengthening UNFPA support to ensure the availability of contraceptives; targeting IEC activities to specific target groups; involving non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to a greater extent in programme activities; and reprogramming part of the unused funds under the area of women, population and development for MCH/FP activities, especially for adolescent girls. These recommendations have been taken into account in the implementation of the programme. However, support related to adolescents has been limited. UNFPA's future support in this area will be developed on the basis of the results of the 1996 PRSD exercise.

II PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

7. The strengthening and expansion of the district-level Maternal and Child Welfare Centres to provide quality comprehensive reproductive health care to women and adolescents is the major component of the fourth UNFPA programme of assistance. Visits to clinics by pregnant women for antenatal care and by women seeking contraceptive information and services have increased substantially, and essential obstetric care is now available in the 11 clinics where doctors and paramedics have been trained and where diagnosis and treatment of reproductive tract infections (RTIs) have been initiated. These activities were expanded in 1996, following the recommendations of an external evaluation; by the end of 1997, it is expected that 49 additional Maternal and Child Welfare Centres will have been strengthened. This will include the provision of technical assistance; the training of doctors and paramedics in reproductive health; the repair and renovation of facilities; and the provision of equipment, supplies and contraceptives. Special attention will be paid to gender concerns.

8. UNFPA has also provided assistance through the Family Planning and Service Training Centre to grass-roots-level NGOs in rural and urban areas not covered by the Government, for the provision of basic reproductive health services and family welfare education. During 1997, technical support will continue to be provided to these NGOs.

9. During the implementation of the programme, the number of district-level family planning offices equipped with management information systems (MIS) has been extended from 21 districts to 64 districts. A joint assessment of the MIS conducted by the Government, the World Bank and UNFPA in 1996 will provide the basis for the further development of the system and of related

training activities during the programme extension, including the design of a set of reproductive health indicators.

10. UNFPA has assisted the Government in maintaining the availability of contraceptives and related commodities through procurement of such commodities with UNFPA regular funds and trust funds. During the programme extension, UNFPA will provide $1.5 million from regular resources for the procurement of contraceptives. The Fund will also provide technical assistance to develop strategies to strengthen the Government's capacity in logistics management and distribution of family planning and reproductive health commodities.

11. Additional funding authority in the amount of $4 million will be required for the reproductive health sector. In 1991-1997, UNFPA assistance for this area would thus total $27.5 million, of which amount $26.4 million would be programmed from regular resources and $1.1 million from multi-bilateral resources.

12. In support of reproductive health activities, UNFPA has assisted the Information, Education and Motivation Unit of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to develop IEC materials, and curricula have been developed with the participation of NGOs for training and orientation of such different groups as trainers, religious leaders and members of cooperatives, among others. During the programme extension, continued support will be provided for the Government's IEC and advocacy activities with special emphasis on mobilizing religious leaders' support for population activities at the village level, enhancing national training and research capacity in IEC and advocacy, and further involving mass media in supporting programme activities.

13. IEC materials and activities have also been developed for policy makers and programme managers to promote gender equality and equity. During the programme extension, the programme will provide support for training on gender issues for district-level functionaries and trainers and for incorporating gender issues in the regular training programmes of the National Institute for Population Research and Training. Members of 5,000 rural cooperatives -- half of them formed by poor women -- have received orientation training on family welfare in conjunction with income-generating activities, and these activities will be expanded during the extension. With UNFPA support, some 4,000 youth leaders have received orientation and training on population and environment, and during the programme extension, population and environment concerns will be incorporated in the regular curricula of youth training institutes.

14. Important progress has been made in institutionalizing population education in the formal school system, in close coordination with the General Education Project supported by the World Bank. At the primary level, curricula have been revised to include such topics as HIV/AIDS, family life education, and gender equity. Some 30,000 teachers have been trained, and UNFPA will continue to support the training of 40,000 additional teachers during the programme extension. Furthermore, support for activities to introduce population education in secondary schools, universities, technical and vocational institutes and religious schools will continue during the programme extension. Preparatory activities to introduce family life education in the non-formal sector will be supported in 1997 with the participation of NGOs.

15. Additional funding authority of $1 million is requested for the IEC and advocacy sector. In 1991-1997, UNFPA assistance for this area would thus total $6.3 million from regular resources.

16. UNFPA has provided support to the 1991 census, as well as to a demographic and health survey. During the extension, further support will be provided mainly through training and technical assistance to strengthen the capacity of the Census Bureau to update population data and information and to develop population projections for development planning purposes, as well as to strengthen the capacity of the Bureau's Health and Demographic Survey Section to conduct population-related socio-cultural research. UNFPA will also provide technical support to the Secretariat of the National Population Council and for the revision of the National Population and Health Policy in order to incorporate ICPD Programme of Action recommendations in the policy. In 1991-1997, UNFPA assistance for the areas of population policy formulation, population dynamics and data collection and analysis would total $2.8 million from UNFPA regular resources.

17. Activities to strengthen the management capacity of the Department of Women's Affairs at the central as well as district level have been initiated in 1996 and will continue during the programme extension in close coordination with the support provided by other donors. To cover these activities and to support gender, population and development activities of NGOs, UNFPA assistance in this sector would total $1.4 million from UNFPA regular resources in 1991-1997.

18. UNFPA is paying special attention to the close coordination of activities with those of other major donors, particularly the World Bank-led consortium of donors. The programme activities would be monitored and evaluated according to standard UNFPA procedures and guidelines. In addition to the mid-term review held in July 1994, a programme review was conducted in the context of the PRSD exercise in September-October 1996.

III RECOMMENDATION

19. UNFPA recommends that the Executive Board approve the extension of the programme of assistance for Bangladesh through the end of 1997 and the increase in the funding authority by $3 million, raising the total funding authority of the programme to $38 million. This includes an amount of $5.9 million that was originally expected from multi-bilateral resources but which was ultimately funded from UNFPA regular resources. Redistribution of programme resources is also requested as shown in the following table:

Sectors	Approved by Governing Council, 1991		Estimated Expenditures 1991-1996		Additional Funds and Redistribution Requested		Total 1991-1997	
	Regular Resources	Multi-bi Resources	Regular Resources	Multi-bi Resources	Regular Resources	Multi-bi Resources	Regular Resources	Multi-bi Resources
Maternal and child health and family planning	17.5	6.0	22.7	1.1	8.9	(4.9)	26.4	1.1
Information, education and communication	5.0	0.3	5.1	-	1.3	(0.3)	6.3	-
Data collection and analysis	0.7	0.3	1.6	-	1.1	(0.3)	1.8	-
Population policy formulation	0.7	-	0.2	-	(0.4)	-	0.3	-
Population dynamics	0.6	-	0.3	-	0.1	-	0.7	-
Women, population and development	3.0	0.4	0.8	-	(1.6)	(0.4)	1.4	-
Programme reserve	0.5	-	-	-	(0.5)	-	-	-
Total	28.0	7.0	30.7	1.1	8.9	(5.9)	36.9	1.1

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